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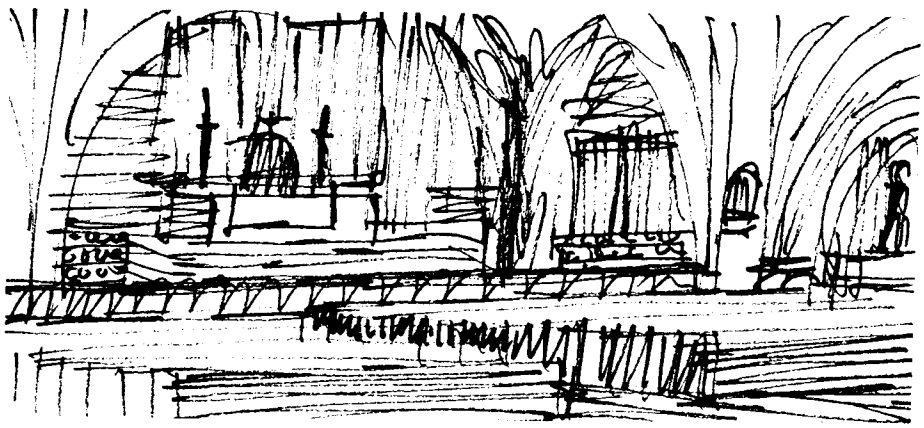

THE RISK OF FAITH

Daniel Callahan

MAO VS. MOSCOW

Seymour Slessinger

THE VULGAR PRESS

David Cort

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CORRESPONDENCE

Clergy and Laity

Catonsville, Md.

To the Editors: A strong case can be made that the very politeness John Tracy Ellis recommends to the laity [letter, Feb. 19] has been a principal factor in making the Church irrelevant in American life.

The position of the layman in the Church is analogous to that of the Negro in American society. Msgr. Ellis' advice really is not very different from that given to Negroes by well-meaning whites. The Negro is no longer in a mood to be polite, however, and his mood is strengthened by the fact that his grievances were acknowledged only when the white Establishment was sufficiently frightened. Until the American bishops are similarly frightened they will continue to offer trivial work assignments and superficial liturgical changes in the guise of *aggiornamento*.

A little rudeness may be good for *them* and for *us*. WILLIAM O'DONNELL

Lay Responsibility

Wayland, Mass.

To the Editors: In agreeing with Michael Novak's accurate description [letter, January 29] of the ordinary layman and his probable reactions to a clerical invitation to partake in parish or diocesan councils, I would stress the point that bishops and priests must really want and believe in shared responsibilities—any lack of sincerity and conviction will certainly bring about all the undesirable reaction which Mr. Novak has catalogued for us. There are many laymen in the American Church today who are in no mood for token gestures—there is no need to go through so much for so little when the status quo already fills that bill. My observation is that a good many curates would second that statement.

Mr. Novak suggests that several competent men in a parish or diocese could be asked to prepare a report in which they would suggest the areas of decision-making for which they would feel willing and able to assume responsibility. It seems to me that the trial-and-error process could be considerably reduced if the laymen were to draw upon the experience of our Episcopalian brethren. The Episcopal Church has a hierarchical structure similar to ours. In addition, it has a long history of shared and well-defined responsibilities. Surely a careful study of their clergy-laity relationships could be of great value to us. (Not to mention the ecumenical good will that would be engendered by our humbly seeking their advice.) If we're really serious about cooperation and practical steps, it would seem a shame to ignore such a likely source of ideas based on practical experience. SUZANNE HOGAN

"Masterful Oversimplification"

Carlisle, Pa.

To the Editors: The letter by Michael Novak [January 29] is perhaps the most masterful piece of generalization and oversimplification ever to emanate from a pen of this caliber. To assume so blithely that all one has to do to affect "ecclesiastical adulthood" in "apathetic" Catholic business and professional men, is to manage somehow to maintain a conversation with them "long enough," is I suggest, the acme of naïveté. To suggest further that you can suddenly transform laymen "neither knowing nor caring much about the Council and its work" into laymen willing and able to serve on a parish or diocesan synod, is at best wishful thinking and at worst utter nonsense. The bishop or priest who would take such advice seriously is not a progressive or liberal thinker; he is rather, like the author on this subject, completely out of touch with reality.

That the Church is woefully lacking in channels for the lay voice, that she needs to seek structural changes so the laymen may move and act with greater freedom, that in many areas now restricted to him, the laymen, if permitted, could employ his talents to effect growth and progress, I would offer a threefold Amen. But to foist on our pastors and bishops men who are neither formed nor mature Christians would be to perpetrate disaster for the *domanimento*. There are too many competent laymen available to articulate our position and assist our clergy to hazard selecting those who would "be so involved in temporalities—race prejudice, let us say—that they would inhibit the preaching of the gospels."

EDWARD G. FARADAY

Winston Churchill

New Haven, Conn.

To the Editors: As a biographer of Winston Churchill I should like to add a word to the discerning articles you have published. He was a man of generous instincts, a noble sense of history and a genius of wit and eloquence with a mind of portentous energy. But it moved at tangents: there is hardly anything he said at one time that he did not counter on another; his "amazing flashes of energizing brilliance" were countered by errors of judgment which could be calamitous.

He owes much of his reputation to what he wrote in the years out of office before 1939; but there, as elsewhere, he turns from one view to another, recalling afterwards only the one that suits him. The reason he was then acting as a journalist, not as a minister, was that as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1925-1930) he had not only been a failure but had made himself so unpopular with his colleagues by dictating to them on every sort of affair that Baldwin as Prime Minister was precluded from offering him a later appointment.

If he at one time wept over the outrage of bombed Dresden at another he threw himself into wholesale bombing with ferocity. His more general principle during the war was: "What matters as long as Germans are being killed?" Nevertheless, after the war, as before, he was so magnanimous and wise about the German people that his shortsightedness in the actual conduct of the war was forgotten.

His difficulty was that he had no real

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belief. He could in a crisis pray earnestly, but Christ was "a socialist"; men who had principles were "goody-goodies." With one grandfather a Duke and the other an American impresario he had grandeur in his zest for adventure and for huge gambles. This enabled him to seize one of the greatest occasions in history and gradually to turn it into a calamity for Europe and a triumph for America.

I cannot agree that he was not (until at least 1935) a writer grand enough to deserve the Nobel prize for literature which he shared with that other Anglo-American, who also died in January. Eliot's judgment was that the war could not be a permanent success because material evil if attacked by material means will be replaced by another evil. Much that Churchill wrote was noble, and generally there was immense zest. It is not until 1940 that he becomes stagey and insincere. He then became the voice which America will long acclaim till it sees (as now in Vietnam, perhaps) how far-reaching were the consequences. ROBERT SENCOURT

"Economics of Aid"

London, England

To the Editors: I should like to reply briefly to the letter of Professor Kottke in your issue of January 8 which has just come to my notice. In it he discusses the article "Economics of Aid" which I wrote for your issue of Nov. 11.

I agree with much that he says and am grateful to him for some important ideas complementary to my own. However, when he criticizes the proposal to stabilize primary commodity prices as one of the ways of helping the developing countries I think that he is being theoretical rather than practical. All the measures he suggests should be given earnest consideration for long-term action.

The urgency of our doing something *now* to ease the situation where deteriorating terms of trade deprive developing countries of the full benefit of aid (for example $26 million worth of aid

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ECUMENISM AND ARGUMENT

Despite the number of years that ecumenism has been in the theological air, it has remained bedevilled by a fair amount of popular misunderstanding. On the one hand, there are those on both the Protestant and Catholic side who fear that ecumenism can only lead to indifferentism. On the other, there are some who seem to think that an official, corporate merger of the churches is just around the corner. Each of these extreme and equally uninformed positions has fewer and fewer adherents. But there is still room to doubt whether the careful distinctions of those professionally concerned with Protestant/Orthodox and Catholic dialogue are yet well understood.

There is an important difference, for instance, between official, high-level contacts and actual negotiations, just as there is also a difference between coming to understand and even sympathize with certain Protestant (or Catholic) theological positions and rejecting the traditional formulations of one's own church. One distinction is especially difficult to grasp: many ecumenists argue that there is nothing incompatible in remaining faithful to the teachings of one's own church while at the same time praying that the Holy Spirit will show the churches how to resolve or transcend their apparently irreducible differences. Does this make sense? Yes, but only on the condition that one trusts in the power of the Holy Spirit and believes that Christ wills the unity of all Christians.

However obscure these distinctions, they are likely to become increasingly relevant as ecumenism moves from one phase to the next. The first phase, roughly speaking, was the private discussions of theologians during the forties and fifties. Another phase was the sending of Catholic observers to the various meetings of the World Council of Churches during the late fifties. Still another was the presence of official Protestant observers during the first and subsequent sessions of the Council. The establishment by Pope John of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity and the promulgation of the decree on ecumenism by Pope Paul marked still other phases. With the recent acceptance by the Holy See of a W.C.C. invitation to establish a joint W.C.C.-Catholic committee, the churches have reached another juncture. Here, for the first time, is a development approaching—negotiation? No. Merger? No. Well, what then?

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The aim of the committee, in the words of Cardinal Bea, will be "to explore together the possibilities of dialogue and cooperation." This is a modest enough goal, but that is not the full significance of the committee. Its real significance is two-fold: that the Catholic Church and the W.C.C. will now talk with each other directly, and that the talks will be of a reciprocal, cooperative nature. Clearly, the work of this committee will be the closest thing yet to "official" discussions between the churches. (And the same can be said, here in America, of the recently revealed plans for talks between Lutherans and Catholics.) Just what will come of these developments is unclear and it would be hazardous to guess. But that is less important, for the time being, than the fact that they will take place. The distance the churches have traveled in the past five years is nothing less than spectacular.

Indeed, so spectacular has this progress been that it should be possible now to raise a question, one which should be more the concern of ecumenical theologians in their private writings than those who will actually engage in the official talks. The question is this: have the informal writings and discussions to date been overly weighted toward determining whether the Catholic Church is capable of reform, theological development and ecumenical dialogue? Put another way, has there been a tendency to assume that the actions, attitudes and decisions of the Catholic Church are far more decisive than those of the Protestant churches? We think such a case could be argued. For one thing, Protestant theologians have been far quicker to bemoan or protest developments at the Council than have their Catholic peers to bemoan or protest developments in Protestantism. For another, Catholic theologians have been quicker to publicly proclaim their opposition to ecumenically harmful trends in the Catholic Church (e.g., toward triumphalistic proclamations) than have Protestant theologians to do the same within their own churches. Perhaps we are displaying our ignorance here of internal Protestant debates. Perhaps, too, the potent importance of Vatican II, the obvious value of timely Protestant protests, the great need for Catholic theologians to convince other Catholics of the necessity to grant Protestantism its proper spiritual dignity, and so forth, have made a certain imbalance inevitable for a time.

But if we are correct in our surmise, then it would be reasonable to hope for a greater reciprocity of criticism, less emphasis on Vatican II alone, a fresh willingness of Catholic theologians to voice more directly their criticisms of contemporary Protestant/Orthodox theology. In the past, Catholics had difficulty criticizing Protestant/Orthodox theology without revealing arrogance and insensitivity. Hopefully those days are past (though one can never tell). Now it ought to be possible to give criticism as well as receive it. The Catholic Church has profited enormously from Protestant and Orthodox critiques, timely warnings and a willingness to speak bluntly when the occasion seemed to call for it. Is it presumptuous to assume that a comparable Catholic honesty could also now be once again a healthy development? If the ecumenical movement had not matured, we would not ask such a question. But it has. Protestants, Orthodox and Catholics should now be able to argue once again; but this time to argue as brothers who will never again allow themselves to fall into a state of hostile indifference.

HOME TO ROOST

Malcolm X and Jimmie Lee Jackson had almost nothing in common. One was a Muslim, the other a Christian. One was a sharp-witted and sophisticated man whose intelligence and bitterness led him from one role to another: junkie, criminal, ascetic, demagogue, heretic. The other was an Alabama laborer, a deacon at a Baptist church, whose quiet way was summed up Southern-style by a friend down the road: "Jimmie was a good old boy." The first died because he wanted to find his own path in life, the second because he wanted to vote. Thousands thronged to the Moslem services for Malcolm X, and a famous actor and playwright delivered the eulogy. Martin Luther King preached at Jimmie Lee Jackson's funeral but more typical of the man and the place was the first memorial service, attended by 150 persons, and preached by a 28-year old minister dressed in overalls and a necktie.

Malcolm X and Jimmie Lee Jackson had almost nothing in common. Except that they were both Americans, both Negro, and both killed within the same week. The latter fact hangs directly on the two former ones.

For many, Malcolm's death is the symbol of just retribution, of violence preached returning to smite the preacher. This is too easy. It does not explain Jimmie Lee Jackson. It explains no more than Malcolm's own statement, following the death of President Kennedy, about the "chickens coming home to roost." Malcolm meant that the violence the white man had spent upon the Negro would now be the white man's own undoing. He was both right and wrong. Like many before him, perhaps he mistook disaster for the hand of a just God. He saw a logic in coercion and force that has never been there. The violence between white and black in America will be the undoing *of us all.* It can and will strike arbitrarily and needlessly: Malcolm, Jimmie Lee Jackson, Michael Schwerner, Ron Chaney, James Goodman. Its instruments may be state troopers, Klansmen, or even Negro fanatics. None is by nature exempt from its sting and from its infection. The chickens will come home to roost; but when they come, they come not to black or white but to all.

That is why the civil rights movement's dedication to non-violence has been so critical. Speaking in New York not long ago, Malcolm X termed the non-violent Negro revolutionaries in Mississippi "cowards." He could not understand non-violence, any more than could millions of white Americans, Northern and Southern, who were nevertheless selfishly grateful that this was the tactic Negroes had chosen. That

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American history has so coursed that Malcolm X could not understand Jimmie Lee Jackson is a tragedy almost as great as the two men's deaths.

CATHOLIC PRESS–BEWARE

Puzzle. Supply the missing word in this statement made last week by Bishop Bernard J. Topel of Spokane, Washington: "There are being printed today ———— publications that should not be found in Catholic homes. I repeat, there are being printed today [etc.] . . . . Therefore I must remind parents most solemnly that their first responsibility to their children is to give them a strong and solid Catholic faith. They must protect this faith of their children. . . . . The time has now come that they must also guard against a certain dangerous ———— reading. From what I have said, parents themselves will be able to judge what is dangerous reading."

Score yourself minus five points if you supposed the missing word was "pornographic," minus three points if you thought it was "secular." The word is "Catholic."

In pointing out the peril to the faith contained in the Catholic press, Bishop Topel exempted his own diocesan newspaper, the *Inland Catholic Register*, but no other journal was given a clean bill of health. He did, however, say that only "a certain few Catholic publications" are the ones through which "souls are being damaged and even destroyed." The Bishop's failure to identify the soul-destroying Catholic journals can only cause some anxiety among Catholic parents, who will be uncertain about which Catholic publications they ought to be suppressing. And if you think parents are going to be anxious about the possibility of some unscrupulous Catholic publisher's sending their child a Catholic magazine in a plain brown wrapper, how do you think we feel at COMMONWEAL? Our appeal to child subscribers is said to be low, yet for a moment there we almost thought the bishop was talking about us. We have criticized bishops by name (which Bishop Topel thinks of in terms of the Nazi efforts to drive wedges between laity and hierarchy), and we have been accused of printing "speculation (which) causes confusion resulting in erroneous consciences among the laity." A good deal of this speculation, at least that on church and state, anti-Semitism, the liturgy, renewal, the place of the layman, and the like, is currently being endorsed in Rome at a meeting Bishop Topel has been attending.

With relief, therefore, we conclude that the bishop is not talking about us. It must be some other publication that is setting bishop against laymen and corrupting the children of Spokane. What publication is that? It beats us.

Meanwhile, at the risk of sowing confusion and setting bishop against bishop, we would like to cite a passage from another statement issued on the Catholic press last week, this one by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore: "To make evident to the laity, on the one hand, that there does exist a basic freedom of which formerly they were insufficiently conscious, and at the same time firmly to maintain the structure of authority as necessary and universally binding on all Catholics is bound to give rise to a certain amount of tension. This is all the more true when authority rests in large measures in the hands of members of an older generation, whose modes of thought and habits of action have become somewhat set . . . . (To quote Pope John:) 'Far from jeopardizing the church's unity, controversies, as a noted English author, John Henry Cardinal Newman has remarked, can really pave the way for its attainment. For discussions can lead to fuller and deeper understanding of religious truths; when one idea strikes against another, there may be a spark.'"

UN PEACEKEEPING

Britain's offer of certain permanent support of United Nations peace forces hardly envisages the Vietnam crisis at its present stage. President Johnson's agonizing decision whether to escalate or withdraw—or to determine how much of a show of American strength is required before entering upon negotiations—is too immediate for that. It is not inconceivable, however, that a UN force to which Britain is contributing may one day be policing the observance of some Vietnamese territorial agreement.

The offer announced in Commons by Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart is a decidedly limited one. It involves only transport and other logistic support for six infantry battalions, and Britain's pledge of such permanent military assistance is expressly declared subject to its own national commitments. Its prime importance is that it comes at a moment when the UN desperately stands in need of help. And the hope is that others will step up with morale-building pledges of useful support.

Meanwhile the United Nations announces that an authorized 33-nation committee is about to begin a diagnosis of all aspects of its peacekeeping problem, including the overdue payments of members opposed to certain past operations. The committee has been instructed to make its report by June 15. The possibility of its recommendations' being accepted is enhanced by its including four of the five permanent members of the Security Council and well-proportioned segments of African, Asian, European and Latin American representation.

Can it reconcile the differences that brought the nineteenth UN session to such a standstill? Future provision will have to take precedence over revived arguments over continued French and Russian refusal to pay for the past. A new formula is needed which will somehow permit international policing under the UN aegis, even when this is not specifically authorized by the Security Council, without at the same time requiring powers that do not positively favor a certain peace operation either to vote for it or help finance it in any way.

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ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

CRISIS TO THE SOUTH

I take it that the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program Conference held in Chicago recently was a success—at least the crowds it drew and the enthusiasm it generated certainly made it seem that way. This is good, for it is hard to think of a more needed venture.

Consider, for example, the problem the Church faces in Latin America, where one-third of the world's Catholic population now lives—about two hundred million people. It is, of course, risky to generalize about such a vast and varied region. Nonetheless it is hard to be very optimistic. In Argentina, for example, parishes are reported where less than fifteen percent of the people attend Mass on Sunday. Even worse, there are working-class parishes in Chile where the religious practice figure is said to be less than one percent.

In a sense, this mode of analysis represents an Anglo-Saxon approach to the problem. It might well be objected that loving one's neighbor is a more important index of one's faith than attendance at Mass every Sunday. Furthermore, if the Spanish tradition in Latin America produces many who are lax about the practice of their faith, it may also produce a greater number of genuine mystics than our more pragmatic approach to Catholicism. Nonetheless, with all due allowances for these factors, it still seems to me that the Church is in serious trouble in Latin America. There are just too many people who are woefully ignorant of their religion; there are just too many who do not practice it at all. Under such circumstances real trouble lies ahead unless drastic changes take place, and soon.

There is more involved than an internal Church problem. Religion in Latin America has always tended to emphasize the individual's approach to God. Stress on the personal, I-Thou relationship with God is necessary, but in Latin America it seems not to have been joined with enough emphasis on the implications of the Incarnation for the civic order. Thus one can find many instances of extraordinary personal charity, but there are too few religiously-oriented men working for social institutions that incarnate the justice and charity which should characterize a Christian social order.

How pressing is the problem? According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, half or more of the children in Latin America suffer from hunger—not the passing hunger we know but a bone-deep failure to receive proper nourishment. Last year, for example, the Latin American Bureau of NCWC quoted a study on the subject by the Mexican Bishops' Center for Aid to the Indians. "It is not hunger in the ordinary sense of the word. . . ," the study said. "It is the old inherited hunger of the tissues and cells of the body which have never had the quality of food necessary to nourish them. . . . Malnutrition in Mexico starts at about three or four months of age, when the mother's milk becomes inadequate in quality and quantity. . . . Without milk, eggs, meat or fish, these people suffer from physical lethargy as well as grave lack of resistance to infection. . . . Their children die at the rate of 360 per 1,000 live births each year."

This is the condition of the poor in Latin America. Typical is a 12 by 20 foot hut in Guatamala, occupied by a family of nine. Straw mats serve as beds; there is no water, no latrine. In the center of the dirt floor stands a small circle of stones, which holds the cooking fire.

Lack of pure drinking water runs second only to malnutrition as a factor in disease. In Central America the death rate from diarrheal disease due to impure water is one out of 100 children annually. For thousands of families sanitary facilities are provided by an open ditch where sewage stands until the rains move it on.

Nine out of every fifteen citizens in Latin America live on the land—as compared with one out of fifteen in the U. S. Farm income is as low as $50 a year in some areas, and farming methods primitive in the extreme. Land reform and industrialization are desperately needed; both require training in new skills and capital development.

A crucial problem is education. According to CICOP, almost half of Latin America's forty million children of school age are not in school at all. In Latin America as a whole, 43% of the population is illiterate. In Haiti the proportion is 90%; in Guatemala, 70%; in Bolivia, 69%. Almost half of Brazil's 65 million citizens cannot read or write. In only three countries—Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay—is illiteracy lower than 20%.

Almost ten million Latin American families live in one room dwellings, and the situation grows worse every year as tens of thousands are squeezed off the land into the overcrowded cities. Thousands live in make-shift shacks constructed out of old cardboard and tin on or near the local garbage dumps. In every Latin American country the infant mortality rate is at least twice that of the United States; in Chile alone 30,000 children die each year without reaching their first birthday, 20,000 of them from hunger.

This, then, is the problem of Latin America in small. It is against this background that CICOP aims at a personal commitment by every American Catholic to some form of cooperation with what needs to be done in Latin America. Does anyone doubt that this work is of crucial importance?

JAMES O'GAR

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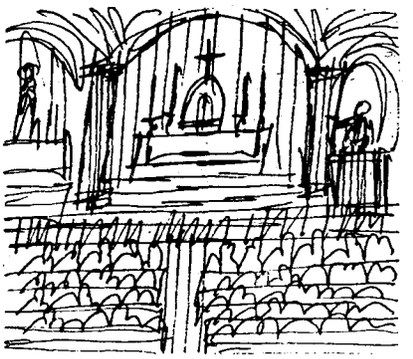
THE RISK OF FAITH

There must be respect for self-probing and doubt

DANIEL CALLAHAN



Cardinal Newman once wrote that "doubt itself is a positive state, and implies a definite habit of mind, and thereby necessarily involves a system of principles and doctrines all its own." Yet it is apparent that a crisis of faith may arise where these conditions for genuine doubt do not exist; indeed, one might say that for purposes of self-examination, a genuine doubt would be easier to cope with than an array of obscure difficulties intermingled with elements of doubt. A Catholic who came to believe, for example, that the Church's teaching on the Resurrection of Christ was simply false, would at least know where he stood; and would presumably know what critical reasons led him to that conclusion.

But what of the Catholic who had no specific reason to doubt the Church's teaching but, instead, found the teaching unintelligible or personally without any meaning? Should one ask whether he accepted the Church's teaching, he might not know what to reply. Or he might say: I am perfectly willing to assent to the Church's teaching, but I do not know what it means to assent to a doctrine which I find meaningless. The fact that the Church does not require that he understand the teaching, but only that he accept it on the testimony of the Church, may give him some meager comfort. At least he will not be willfully rebelling. Yet his problem will have been resolved only in the most formal way; concretely, he will be as much at sea as ever.

Problems of this kind must be given greater attention. My own conviction is that the contemporary Catholic is faced with perplexities about his faith and about the Church which shatter any simple theological apparatus that would sharply distinguish a doubt from a difficulty. The burning questions today are not only whether this or that doctrine can be accepted or whether the Church's authority to define dogma ought to be respected. Such questions bear only on the magisterial rights of the Church. Instead, the direction of Catholic self-probing, if I interpret the signs correctly, is toward meaning and significance. In recent centuries, to judge at least from the concerns of older theological manuals, the apologetic credentials of Christianity preoccupied men's minds: Did Christ rise from the dead? Has man been redeemed? Are the claims of the Church justified? What must a Catholic believe in order to be saved? Similarly, in matters of Christian ethics, men apparently wanted to know what is a licit act and what is illicit. What is just and what is unjust? What is a mortal sin and what is a venial sin?

New Questions

These questions have by no means disappeared today, and there is no reason to expect that they will. But they are becoming secondary. Today men want to know what it is to live the Christian life; what it means to be committed to Christ and the Church; what it means to be a morally responsible person. Questions of this kind cannot be answered in any summary fashion; even less can one reduce the answers to tight systems, capable of being encapsulated in manuals and textbooks. They are all questions which encompass mystery, questions posed by the self, seeking not specific directions for this or that decision in life but

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This article is an excerpt from Honesty in the Church, *by Daniel Callahan, to be published by Charles Scribner's Sons on March 30. Mr. Callahan is an Associate Editor of* COMMONWEAL *and author of* The Mind of the Catholic Layman, *newly available in paperback.*

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some sense of what it means for a man to engage himself with God in the first place.

It is not difficult to understand why the Catholic should find such basic problems taking on a new urgency. Nor is it difficult to understand why the solutions of the past seem to so many to have lost their pertinence. Modern man lives in a world of vast and rapid change; the social stabilities which once helped to ward off cosmic terror are disappearing; the scientific certainties which once gave man the

impression that he lived in a materially unchanging world are evaporating; the belief that progress was inevitable has been dealt some shattering blows. There is no end to changes of this kind. When the Catholic today asks that the Church find a fresh language to express old insights, or a rich language for new insights, he reflects the restlessness of contemporary man and the contemporary Christian. He, too, has been cast adrift by the tide of history and human development. The Church he sees about him, even the Church engaged in renewing itself, still has about its body the garb of other eras. He does not live in those eras. They are strange and alien to him. He is thus forced to begin all over.

For some decades now, the Church has tried to avoid this renewal; fortunately, it is beginning to see that it can do so no longer. The evidence of this recognition appears on every side. It can be seen in the reluctant abandonment, in practice if not always in theory, of the attempt to merge the philosophy of St. Thomas with contemporary modes of philosophy. It can be seen in the gradual abandonment of Latin in the liturgy of the Church. It can be seen in the adoption of the techniques of form-criticism in biblical studies. It can be seen in the gradual demise of casuistry in moral theology, and with this demise the growing disinterest in the traditional language and concepts of scholastic theology.

More positive evidence, however, is to be found in the contemporary approach to faith, best summed up in the words "encounter" and "trust." Faith, that is, finds its meaning in the meeting of the individuals with God through Christ, the son of God. This meeting is characterized by trust in God, animated by an awareness of freedom and, at the same time, by a conviction that faith is a gift of God. Put differently, faith is the mode of relationship by which man engages himself with God; it is the giving of the whole self to God, confident that this giving will not be betrayed. There is nothing here to suggest that faith does not also involve an assent to certain truths about God; but the emphasis does not lie in that direction, and for a very good reason. To accept Christ is not to commit oneself to a philosophy. It is to commit oneself to a person. One must, because one remains a rational being, believe that Christ is who He says He is. The "motives of credibility"—to use a traditional phrase—do not become irrelevant. But they are now seen in a different context, one in which the motives of belief are recognized to be clearly distinguishable from the actual reality of belief. It is this latter reality which must engage the whole person.

Loss of Faith

An important consequence here is that the expression "to lose one's faith" takes on a new meaning. For if faith is a relationship with God, it is misleading to speak of faith as if it were an object of some kind; that is, as if it were a mental or emotional entity which we somehow possess within us. Understood this way, "to lose one's faith" sounds very much like the kind of loss which the expression "to lose one's car key" signifies. But there is clearly a difference if "losing one's faith" is taken to mean an inability to sustain a once living relationship with God. A person who does not "have faith" is not a person who lacks an object labeled "faith" in his mind. He is a person who does not trust God, does not know Him, is not committed to doing His will. One can further see that a loss of faith admits of degrees, just as does the possession of faith. Our trust in God can be weak or strong. "As we can grow in graces," Newman observed, "so surely can we inclusively in faith." God does not fail us, but our grasp of God may wax and wane, subject to the stresses of the free mind and to the inner and outer forces which assail our consciousness. Josef Pieper, paraphrasing St. Thomas Aquinas, speaks of the "curious coexistence of certainty and uncertainty, which not only describes but actually constitutes the psychological situation of the believer." There can thus be an "element of uncertainty in the act of belief. . . . it is part of the nature of belief to leave doubts possible. This possibility is based on the fact that the believer's intellect is not really satisfied; rather, the mind, insofar as it believes, is operating not on its own but on alien soil."

To this last comment of Pieper's, I would add a further suggestion. In a totally Christian culture, or at least a culture dominated by Christian signs and symbols and pervaded by a Christian theology, the "alien soil" of belief may seem less strange. There will be a common language by means of which men can share and confirm each other's values. There will be a common metaphysic, even if inchoate, whereby men will share common assumptions about the nature of reality. There will be a common religious community in which men, by sharing a sense of the same mystery of existence, can confirm the naturalness of their

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common faith. Whether such a Christian culture ever existed in all its purity is a debatable point. At any rate, the contemporary Western world no longer possesses such a culture; Christianity exists in our world, but Christendom does not. Hence, the soil of belief is more alien than ever: the traditional theological language has ceased to convey much meaning to a generation of Catholics who more naturally speak in the very different idiom of the contemporary world; there is no common metaphysic shared by modern man—and there is ceasing to be a clear metaphysic in the Church since that once provided by Scholasticism is being replaced by a groping attempt to discern a personalist and a biblical metaphysic. There is, finally, no common religious community among men.

These are shattering changes for many, and the number of those afflicted grows as the vestiges of man's past history fade away in the face of the modern world. "The inherited 'images of the world,'" Ida Görres once wrote, "is the soul in which faith ripens and bears fruit, the flesh wherein the message of faith is incarnated. And when a separation is imposed, which is in a way to be expected, since the images of the world are temporary, while the message is everlasting, it is a real agony for the man who is subject to it." Yet what was once perhaps an isolated agony becomes today a common one. There is terror before the cosmos, before history, before an unpredictable future. Frau Görres also makes a valuable distinction between "authentic unbelief" and "blinded faith." The former, she writes, "is proud of itself, and is irritated by or laughs at the spectacle of the simple believer; it confirms in their doubts those who weaken; it ridicules those who bear or represent the Church, and rejoices in their imperfections and mistakes." The latter, by contrast, "behaves quite differently. It continues walking at the modest pace of the ordinary Christian. It does not show its distress. How many among us lead this life? There are priests grappling with the intimate obscurities which devour them; nuns for whom, in the secret of their souls, everything seems to have lost all meaning. . . ."

The Church's Dark Night

Could one go so far as to say, perhaps, that it is no longer the isolated saint who will go through the "dark night of the soul" but that the whole Church, as a community, may have entered into such a night? This is a question worth considering in an age where our old concepts of God no longer seem to bring us close to Him, where Providence appears darkly veiled, where Christians find themselves more and more uncomfortable when they ask themselves why the Church seems to have so little hold upon the minds of men. Despite the work of Pope John and the regenerative forces freed by the Second Vatican Council, it is not difficult to discover indications of frustration, hints of a far-reaching malaise, a bewilderment before the immensity of the problems confronting the Church. Part of this stems from a recognition that it takes a painfully long time for renewal sought at the highest levels in the Church to seep down to the lower levels. Part is due to an irrepressible feeling that the Council has barely scratched the surface of the exigencies of total renewal. Part arises from the practical resistance which many of the forms of renewal encounter among those who would hold on to the old ways. Part is due to a belief that the Council is solving problems which have already been replaced by new ones.

In *Ecclesiam Suam* Pope Paul VI speaks of the "great transformations, upheavals and developments" of mankind. "All of this," he says, "like the waves of an ocean, envelops and agitates the Church." That raises the possibility, in this judgment, "that a danger bordering almost on vertiginous bewilderment can shake the Church's very foundations and lead men to most bizarre ways of thinking. . . ." But there is hope as well. There has been a Council; there is movement and there is activity. Above all, there is a perception that all is not right in the Church; however much this insight may be a source of anguish, it can also be a source of hope.

The difficult task is to keep the hope and the anguish in a proper relationship with each other. It is good for the Christian to hope, but this hope must have a supernatural basis and not be a naïve escapism, a grasping at straws. This means that the human experience of despair and anguish will have to be accepted. They provide the motive for an examination of faith and the Church which might otherwise be lacking. Pope Paul VI is undoubtedly right in suggesting that the present bewilderment can lead people to "most bizarre ways of thinking." But could this not indicate many possibilities not suggested by his words: that those so led are in desperate need of a nourishment they are not receiving; that men are casting about, by bold and imaginative speculations, for a new purchase on Christ and the Church; that what appears "bizarre" at the moment may turn out to be a new direction of inestimable value? Authority seems ever ready to panic when this happens—Pope Paul VI felt the need to lay a heavy stress in his encyclical on obedience—but it may be boldness which is required.

There is not a serious want of obedience in the Church today; authority can have little complaint on this score. What is lacking is a conviction in the Church that the way out of the desert lies primarily in an instant response to commands. Men obey today, but they do not always know why they are obeying, nor is it always clear to them that their submission serves either their own spiritual welfare or that of the Church. To say that they do not need clarity here, but only fidelity, is a safe and useless observation. It is not the kind of observation which feeds man's spirit; and that feeding is what men want in their obedience. . . .

Faith, it is often said, entails risk. A man leaps beyond himself to touch God, to respond to the grace God offers when that grace is perceived only as the faintest glimmer in

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the depths of his being. Yet faith today may be said to entail still another risk: the risk of exercising one's freedom to look at one's faith. For the Catholic trained only to see faith as a precious good to be preserved, nothing may be more difficult than to take the risk of inquiring into the quality of this faith. Such an inquiry carries with it dangerous lines of exploration. It means raising the possibility that one has been misdirected by one's parents, one's friend, one's teachers, and by the Church itself. Or that one's faith is nothing more than the product of an ecclesiastical system which, given sufficient time, would be able to make any person believe anything it might want him to. Or that one believes because one does not have the courage to break away from the securities against anxiety which faith —almost any faith—can provide. "Faith," someone once said, "is a quality of mind by which we are enabled to believe things we know to be untrue." Not every Catholic will find it easy to take this cynical definition seriously —to ask himself if even this possibility should be considered. But it must. Only a willingness to bear the pain of looking fearlessly into the self, of veering away from no possibility, will ensure that the relationship with God is a reality of the self and not the product of a will to illusion.

The same may be said, analogously, of the individual's faith in the Church. That there must be such a faith is evident. For the Catholic, faith in God and faith in the Church are inextricably related. It is through the Church that the Good News is brought to us. At the same time it must be kept in mind that God, realized through the Church, is the ultimate goal of our life, not the Church as a temporal institution. The Church was created by God as a means of bringing us to him. Our earthly life in the Church is a foretaste of the community of man with man in God, but it is not that community fully realized, fully perfected. It is important to keep these distinctions clear, for there is a sense in which one could mistake an identification with the Church as a perfect identification with God.

If commitment to God cannot be realized without a commitment to the Church, one must also say that a commitment to the Church can not be allowed to serve as a substitute for God. "The Church proclaims and possesses," in the words of the Lutheran sociologist Peter L. Berger, "a certain faith. This faith is addressed to each individual in his unique existence before God. He cannot hold this faith except as the unique individual he is. As a substitute for this painful acquisition of faith, the individual can instead identify with the Church, the social collectivity which . . . holds that faith as an ideology. His real act of decision, then, is not toward the Church that claims to possess it. By identifying with the Church he deludes himself into thinking that he has made a decision of faith."

The only way in which one can ensure that his own faith in the Church is not just the acceptance of an ideological identity masquerading as a genuine relationship with God through the community of the Church is, again, by asking himself hard questions about that faith. He must discern whether his acceptance of the Church rests on a fear of breaking with his family and friends, whether it stems from a desire to have a social identification, whether it represents merely a fear of thinking and deciding for himself, whether he perhaps sees it as having a utilitarian value for society and thus worthy of support. There is, of course, the possibility that all of these motives may coexist with a genuine faith; but that, too, is worth knowing, for to the extent that they do they endanger the purity of faith, debasing it by unworthy motives and inclinations. When large numbers of Catholics are so inclined, the Church as a whole will inevitably be affected. The people of God will then be shading off into a collectivity of discrete individuals, each using the Church to work out his own psychological and sociological difficulties. A church which is seen by its members as a special form of group therapy will become a church in name only.

JOHN FANDEL

ONELINERS

One line poems? And why not? Since all that most of us remember of most poems is a line—and this, often enough, the only line that is worth remembering. P. A. SPALDING

After the Storm
O Moon, for whom dark clouds by turns are silver!

Windy Autumn Afternoon
Trees sifted the sun to a gust of gold falling leaves.

End of Summer and All
The rose unpetalled, but still the thorn, the spiked stalk.

Gull and Air
So finely together, the gull faded to visible air.

Night
The blue sky the bluebird flew in followed him west.

Oral
On the old round world over the oval ocean rolls.

Modification
Last words of the dying grass, a cricket's brown intonation.

Compeers
Sun on rapids, breeze in forsythia.

Walking Under October Maples
Each step stirs surfs in silent seas of leaves.

Time
Local public clocks, lilacs, larks, lack.

Thaw
A sudden summer simmers in the snow.

Mid-Winter
Being begins to long, then, evening lingering longer.

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End of a long march?

MAO VS. MOSCOW

SEYMOUR SLESSINGER

Mao Tse-tung used to argue that Nikita Khrushchev was solely responsible for the difference between them. Today, however, five months since the latter's colleagues in the Kremlin forced him to step down for reasons of "advanced age and failing health," Mao appears no more satisfied than before. After a very brief truce in the "little cold war," during which "warm greetings" were extended and Chou En-lai was sent to help celebrate the forty-seventh anniversary of the November Revolution in the Soviet capital, he has begun to inveigh indirectly against the new Soviet leaders. He is evidently headed in the direction of resuming overt attacks that have brought Sino-Soviet relations to the very brink of a complete split once already.

This comes as no real surprise, especially if one considers that Mao's complaint against Khrushchev was not as personal as it seemed toward the end. Khrushchev was a target not for his own sake, but rather for the reason of his symbolization of what the Chinese leader had come to regard over a period of three decades as a Soviet Russian threat to the world-wide Communist revolution, and for which, incidentally, Stalin had been chiefly responsible.

The roots of the Chinese attitude go back to the nineteen-twenties, when Stalin, following tactical precedents established by Lenin before his death, insisted that the quickest way to destroy Western capitalism was to deprive it of the raw material resources and markets in the East. This would be done by encouraging and assisting anti-Western nationalists in the colonies and less-developed countries (the "semi-colonies," as they were called). What was wrong with that? Simply that the scheme failed everywhere it was tried, and nowhere more disastrously than in China. Using an army that had been organized, trained, and equipped by Stalin, Chiang Kai-shek turned against the Chinese Communists in 1927, killing many and causing the rest to scatter. No one knows better than Mao Tse-tung how high a price was paid for that mistake. His wife, a sister, and two brothers were among Chiang's immediate victims. On the "Long March" to Yenan, three of his children were left behind for safe-keeping—and haven't been found since.

Stalin might have given his disappointed Chinese comrades a chance to excuse him for one tactical blunder, but he didn't. Instead, exercising his familiar prerogative of asserting infallibility in the face of disaster, he blamed the debacle on them; and, charging willful sabotage, he purged several of the leaders to prove his point. (Mao was not affected by this, but only because he had already been repudiated by the Chinese Politburo and was busy organizing his own peasant-based revolutionary movement in the countryside. An obituary notice in Moscow, in March, 1930, listed him as dead due to tuberculosis. In fact, he was about to gain control of the Communist Party.) Furthermore, after the Second World War, Stalin reinstituted the policy of encouraging Eastern nationalism against Western capitalism, which included another effort to win the confidence of Chiang Kai-shek and, according to one Communist source, instructions to Mao to disband his armies.

SEYMOUR SLESSINGER, *an assistant professor at the University of Connecticut, is currently a visiting scholar at Columbia.*

Stalin's Mistakes

Was additional proof of Stalin's incompetence as a revolutionary leader necessary? Mao obviously didn't think so, for he ignored the orders from Moscow and proceeded to push Chiang right off the mainland. What is more, on the occasion of the founding of the Chinese People's Republic in 1949, the Chinese revolution was formally proclaimed "the classic type of revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries." What this meant, in effect, was that Communists would never again put all their revolutionary "eggs" in one anti-Western nationalist "basket" if Mao had anything to say about it.

But this was not the complete basis of the Chinese leader's disenchantment with Russian leadership before the Khrushchev decade. Stalin's actions also gave rise to serious doubts about his conception of the principle of Communist internationalism. In 1946, for example, Soviet occupation forces in Manchuria systematically stripped that region of its industrial equipment, an event that not only denied Mao an opportunity to establish a firm economic base for his own revolutionary effort, but contradicted the fundamental obligation of all Communists to promote the growth of industrial working classes wherever possible. In addition, after the creation of the People's Republic in 1949, Stalin treated them as little better than a satellite. He refused to return Tannu Tuva, which had been incorporated into the Soviet Union during the closing months of the war; he delayed evacuating Port Arthur indefinitely; and, despite an early promise that Outer Mongolia would be returned to China "when China has driven the imperialists from its territory," he demanded and obtained recognition of the

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"independent" Mongolian People's Republic. Finally, Stalin insisted upon and obtained the creation of Sino-Soviet "mixed companies" in Sinkiang, which gave him an opportunity to exploit China's resources without payment. Needless to say, there was justifiable cause for the men in Peking to wonder whether Stalin was not in fact a nationalist "wolf" disguised in internationalist "sheep's" clothing.

Why the Delay?

In retrospect, the ground was already prepared for an open Sino-Soviet split in the last years of the Stalin era. Why didn't it occur then? One reason was the Soviet dictator's decision to accept the Chinese revolutionary *fait accompli* with uncustomary good grace, even to the extent of bowing to the demands for greater emphasis on revolutionary warfare in the colonies and less-developed countries. Another reason was Mao's preoccupation with the consolidation of his own power in China and his dependence on Moscow for protection against outside "enemies," two factors that made it inopportune to insist on full Soviet recognition of China's sovereign rights. And a third was Stalin's death in 1953, coming as it did at a moment when, owing to disappointments in Korea and elsewhere, the Soviet leader was beginning to express some second thoughts about the wisdom of having accepted the Chinese revolution as a "classic type."

It wouldn't be unreasonable to assume that, of all Stalin's heirs, Nikita Khrushchev was the favorite in Peking, the hope being that the success of the "least likely to succeed" would afford Mao an opportunity to set the standards of Communist leadership. But Khrushchev's "de-Stalinized" version of Soviet policy was far from what Mao had in mind. Instead of satisfying his conception of revolutionary needs, it gave fresh life to old doubts about Russian leadership capabilities, and to such an extent as to make "Stalinist" an acceptable epithet in leading Chinese circles.

First, and foremost, there was Khrushchev's decision to base his approach to the less-developed countries on the old assumption that nationalists in those countries were Communism's natural allies against the West. In Peking, of course, this could only be interpreted as a return to a discredited policy that spelled disaster. And what made things even worse was Khrushchev's enlargement of its geographical scope, taking in Africa and Latin America as well as Asia, and the impossible burden that his aid program imposed on the Communist bloc economies.

Secondly, there were also signs that Khrushchev was no less nationally oriented than Stalin had been. Some of the worst features of Stalin's policy were, to be sure, effaced. Port Arthur was returned; the "mixed companies" liquidated; large-scale credits and industrial aid granted; and the Chinese Communist Party elevated to a position of ostensible parity with the Soviet Party. But the status of Tanna Tuva and Outer Mongolia remained unchanged, and there were still other aspects of Khrushchev's policy that suggested an inordinate attraction to national qualities, inordinate at least for a Communist who was supposed to be convinced that nationalism was but a part of capitalism's cultural "superstructure."

Thus, as far as Mao was concerned, a Communist leader in Khrushchev's position had no right to give priority to consumer needs at home when other Communists were either struggling to win power, or, if already in power, were trying to build viable economies from the ground up. Nor, the bill of indictment went on, did he have the right to allow other Communist regimes under his influence to put primary stress on their national interests; to rehabilitate a "national deviationist" like Tito, who had been cast out of the Communist fold once already; to introduce "capitalist" methods into his own economic program; to try to lessen international tensions that the revolution had helped create; or to try to punish other Communists for refusing to accept this "incorrect" application of Marxist-Leninist principles.

These were the main features of Khrushchev's policy that the Chinese leader objected to. Along with a host of other minor ones, they added up to the inescapable conclusion that the Soviets, no matter who occupied the top rung on the political ladder, were just incapable of formulating a "correct" Communist policy. And what if they refused to bow to this "fact of life"? The answer was implicit in the Chinese conduct. Displaying no inclination to prevent the course of events from unfolding toward a complete rupture, they seemed to say that if the Russians could not face up to reality, then it was time to throw them out of the revolutionary movement altogether.

Mao's Present Reaction

Considered against this historical backdrop, Mao's reaction to the events in Moscow these past few months can be reasonably interpreted as follows. For one thing, he extended "warm greetings" to the new Soviet leaders not so much because they had ousted Khrushchev, but rather in the hope that this signalled a turning point in Soviet policy. When Chou was sent to Moscow for the celebration of the November Revolution's anniversary, his real mission was to "help" Brezhnev and Kosygin bring Soviet policy into close conformity with the guidelines already being employed in the Chinese capital.

For another thing, despite the alleged "comradely spirit" that prevailed during the Sino-Soviet discussions, Chinese hopes were profoundly shaken by the discovery that Brezhnev and Kosygin really meant it when they hastened to reassure the West and the less-developed countries (including the United States and India, Peking's two prime "enemies") that there would be no modification of the policy of peaceful coexistence and that they had no intention of halting what had come to be regarded in Peking as creeping nationalism-capitalism in the Soviet bloc. But the crowning blow came on December 12, when, despite known Chinese opposition, *Pravda* announced that a commission

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would meet on March 1 to plan a world Communist conference.

Under these circumstances, it is small wonder that Mao, whose colleagues have honored him with the exalted title of "greatest contemporary theoretician of Marxism-Leninism," is once again making the type of veiled accusations that preceded the direct attacks against Khrushchev. Brezhnev and Kosygin have not been criticized by name as yet, but castigations of Soviet policy, described as "Khrushchevism without Khrushchev," are becoming more frequent. And equally significant is the fact that the Albanians, who have foreshadowed Chinese tonal changes before, are now speaking as though an all-out conflict is already under way. "We are compelled to fight on," said Radio Tirana recently, "because the clique that supported Khrushchev is still in power." Hence, if the past is any criterion, it shouldn't be long before name-calling and personal invective become prime features of Sino-Soviet relations once more.

Without access to Peking's innermost councils, one can only speculate right now whether the Chinese are prepared to go as far as they evidently were when Khrushchev was their target. Nevertheless, it wouldn't be unreasonable to imagine that they are at least as determined to have their way, and probably even more so now than before. In addition to their conviction that the Russians have lost all claim to leadership in the Communist world, they now have reason to believe that they can prove the point beyond doubt. The Chinese are clearly impressed by their own ability to survive the "incalculable difficulties and losses" imposed by Khrushchev's economic "embargo" and to develop nuclear weapons without outside help. What is more, they now have important allies throughout the Communist world, including the Albanian, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Indonesian Communist parties, large sections of the Indian and Ceylonese parties, and minority factions within a host of West European and Latin American parties. And it is no secret that Castro Cuba, despite its dependence on Moscow for economic survival, prefers the revolutionary line they espouse, or that a number of pro-Soviet parties are reluctant to follow Moscow's lead all the way to a showdown. In other words, the Chinese are acutely aware of their psychological edge as a vigorous, up-and-coming political force; they can be expected to exploit it for all it's worth.

There is one other factor in the present condition of Sino-Soviet relations that adds to the likelihood of an all-out Chinese effort to displace the Russians, namely, Mao Tse-tung's age. Mao, having turned seventy-two this past December 26, is no doubt mindful of the little time that is left to him for completing the task of putting the Communist revolution back on a proper track, not to forget, of course, the retribution due him for the grievous personal losses suffered because of Russian mistakes. Clearly, then, Mao's "Long March" didn't end in Yenan, or even in Peking; its terminal point will be reached when the Russians are forced to accept either unconditional surrender or an irrevocable division of the Communist world.

Hearst in war, Hearst in peace

THE VULGAR PRESS

DAVID CORT

The neurotic vulgarity of the newspaper mind, especially at its most brilliant, is measured by the classic stories: the murder of a minister and choirsinger (Hall-Mills), the kidnaping-murder of a national hero's baby (Lindbergh), Loeb and Leopold, the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, etc. The newspaper feeds on gross quarrels, sins and accusations. It needs a despicable world; it could not sell a single edition in Paradise. It tells a story that begins and ends today; the story begins again tomorrow. When there is nothing to say it still has to appear to say something. It needs a maximum of noise, a minimum of message. The effect of all this on the society will be returned to.

This role of the newspaper was actually invented by Pulitzer and perfected by William Randolph Hearst and his editors. Beginning before 1900, these men brought to the gathering of the more sordid news a satanic energy, cleverness and dedication that made them legends among newspapermen. They did brilliant detective work, stole murderers' diaries, borrowed and photographed the contents of the coroner's briefcase, kidnaped murderers, did photographic re-enactments of shootings, kept key officials and police on the secret payroll, invented the re-write man and the circulation war, which was the model for the subsequent bootlegging wars, used headlines a half-page high, in red ink, invented the sectional edition, and perfected the practical joke. This is an imposing corpus of creation, but not much of it improved the American atmosphere. Indeed, most of it helped debauch the society.

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There are two other ways of looking at the Golden Age of the Hearst performance. First, the sheer energy, talent and pride that the operation brought into being are a phenomenon that far nobler causes must inspect with awe and envy. To be part of a fast-moving, free-spending, ruthless, dedicated team can change a man for life. Behind any such organization there must be a driving idea, a mystique. In the case of the Hearst empire, unfortunately, the idea was that Hearst ought to be President of the United States. The way to bring that day nearer was to sell more newspapers, as if each sold newspaper were a vote for Hearst for President. The way to sell more newspapers was to get more sensational.

And as the American people looked at Hearst in the lurid glare of his newspapers, he looked less and less like Presidential material. Surely there is some sort of tragedy here that strikes deeper than *Citizen Kane*.

Second, Hearst papers supported precisely those causes that, to a doctrinaire Hearst-hater, would seem the causes Hearst must have opposed: labor unions, the eight-hour day, minimum wages, woman suffrage, trust-busting, public utilities, anti-narcotics legislation and Prohibition (until 1926). He was, in short, in favor of the interests of the people who bought his papers.

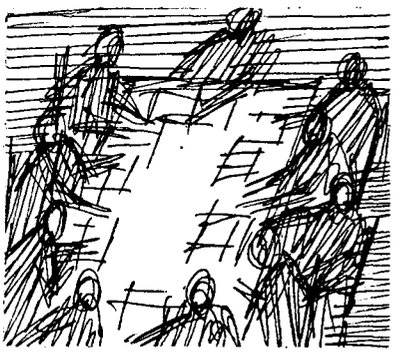
His later fight with the Newspaper Guild, with which I am probably in sympathy, is all that is remembered. Since at that time the bankers controlled his papers, he may not even have been responsible for the intransigence there.

Chicago Madhouse

All these matters come to mind with a new book, George Murray's *Madhouse on Madison Street* (Follett, Chicago, $5.95). The author is on the ghost of Hearst's old Chicago *American*, whose name and goodwill were sold to the Chicago *Tribune* in 1956 for $11,000,000. The style is vulgar, and thus perfectly suited to the material. It is as if we are in a Chicago newspapermen's saloon, listening to an oldtimer boast of the ancient heroes, horrors and practical jokes. Frankly, it fascinated me.

All the peculiar Chicago shades are here: Walter Howey, the Annenbergs, Koenigsberg, Carson, Ben Hecht, Charles MacArthur, Brisbane, Jack Lait, Foster Coates, Arthur Pegler and Webb Miller, and also those two fantastic aristocrats of the *Tribune* opposition, Joe Patterson and Bertie McCormick, respectively captain and colonel. A Hearst man's vendetta, that of the terrible Walter Howey, drove Joe out of Chicago to found the New York *Daily News*. With his prim hairdo and his one blue glass eye, Howey had no single drop of forgiveness in his veins. He is the editor in the newspaperman's play, "The Front Page," by Hecht and MacArthur, and he is the archetype of the newspaper mind. Walter Howey could not be invented; he had to invent himself.

He put on a series of mummeries which the *Tribune* reported each time as honest news, and Howey then revealed as publicity stunts. One involved an Indian prince who had to register his sister's marriage before midnight to get her an inheritance. Another presented a young man whose father's will compelled him to spend a million dollars in a year. A third was a supposed gold miner who had struck it rich in the Klondike and clogged the Chicago streets by throwing handfuls of dollar bills into the air. Each time the fraud was documented down to the finest detail. Every possible suspicion of the *Tribune* editors had been anticipated and disarmed. But what have these very amusing shenanigans to do with the real business of the city of Chicago?



Hearst editors knew where most of the political bodies were buried. They made it their chief concern. Now and then they would publish a general shotgun blast at corruption, *sans* names or cases. The story always pleased the the people but was never intended to do them any good. Its real purpose was to warn all the corrupt politicians and police that the editors had the goods on them, and that they had better keep in line.

It slowly dawns on one that most crime is sponsored and protected by connivance with law-enforcement personnel, including incidentally the police but going far above the police. If governors, mayors and legislators are indebted one way or another to criminal elements, any attempt to punish those elements must be abortive. After a few such abortions the whole official society, down to the cop on the beat, gets the loaded signal, and becomes corrupt. There is no mistaking the signal, and anyone who continues to enforce the law honestly is uselessly imperiling his career and his life.

There is much argument over whether the American press should "try" cases in print before the courts get them, in contrast with the British system of refusing the press any information on cases awaiting trial. The comparison is ridiculous. The English system is aristocratic and fairly honest. The American system is democratic in the worst sense (popular election of machine-named judges) and produces a high percentage of personnel who are incompetent or corrupt or both. The only protection the people have is an inquisitive press. The press is an inadequate critic, as the Hearst story demonstrates, but it is all we have.

A wonderful corollary is the thought that one could end most crime overnight if one could wave a magic wand that ended all contracts between officials and crooks. Actually, of course, any such thaumaturgy would temporarily destroy

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all government. Even honest politicians would advise against it. (For details, read pp. 175-178 on Howey's system of reading politicians' net worth).

In 1947 when Hearst's last Chicago paper, the *Herald-American*, was dying, it almost became heroic, but not quite, by hiring ex-Acting Captain of Police William Drury, who had always treated the top syndicate criminals exactly as if they were criminals. This naturally outraged the whole political, police and business hierarchy and led to his dismissal from the force. Drury brought to the paper the benefit of a huge file, and tape recordings, on the ramifications of Chicago crime. The fact that the paper could or did print very little of it is definitive evidence on the vulgar ineffectuality of the newspaper as a defender of society.

Drury was convinced there were well over 500,000 narcotics addicts in this country (official figure: 75,000). To supply these the syndicate, controlled at the top by the Mafia, must have regular large imports of heroin, regular supplies of milk sugar and large pharmaceutical factories to mix and package the two. All these trails had to be broad enough for a baby to follow. The protection for the Mafia, he thought, came from high officials in federal, state and city governments, from law enforcement, the judiciary, the Congress, and also from the banks, savings and loan associations, drug companies, and other businesses which the syndicate had bought up, perhaps a $40 billion interest permeating the whole society from bottom to top.

Senator Kefauver's crime investigation committee was the only natural outlet for Drury's evidence. He was scheduled to appear before it in Chicago September 26, 1950. In the dusk of September 25, his body was found in his garage, mangled by four shotgun blasts and a .45 bullet. His files disappeared.

Sic semper veritati.

A Curious Selectivity

The application of laws to men is necessarily crude and vulgar. But this process, seen in the statutes, the police, the lawyers, the courts and public figures, is what the newspaper lives on and defines its essential vulgarity. A respectable couple who quarrel over a divorce are soon famous and contemptible. But it is curious that the men who deserve fame, the leaders of the Mafia, who are constantly in the night clubs, constantly visible to the reporters and columnists, remain in a friendly obscurity. Their public love-lives are as inviolable as those of the newspapermen themselves. (With one single current exception.) Only when an accusation is made can the newspaper pillory the citizen. The true evil lives very comfortably with the press.

And yet the newspaper is the most effective routine cement binding the individual to his community, nation and world. Radio and TV are far from competing with the newspaper, though they try. The citizen who does not read books has essentially only the newspaper to define his world.

It is a fair charge that what the newspaper prints makes the community—the real community, not the one on the front pages. The newspaper stimulates both the youthful acceptance of hoodlumism, and the fright of the women; the increase of drug addiction and the policeman's reaction to the addict; and so on. The newspaper can and does disavow responsibility. "We print the news." But what people "saw in the paper" very largely controls their picture of the community at any particular time; and what made the strongest impression occupies the forefront of that picture. Thus, the newspaper's neurotic vulgarity is transferred to the people.

Of course this is not the real world. In this recognition the news magazines have arisen and, following behind them, various kinds of commentary, but these reach diminishing fractions of the people and can rarely say anything simple, carrying and blatant. Indeed, they often boast of their exclusiveness, their insideness, their secret cant.

Thus, the daily newspaper holds the field.

But have you not noticed that, as we stay with this subject, we are insistently reminded of something other than extinct editors, something in the air today, and of course it is the new literature of sensation, impotency and disaster. For the new novels and plays mirror the world of the newspaper, as if it were real. The new novelists and playwrights actually think this is the real world. At last, after all these years, somebody—or everybody—believes in the world of the newspaper. This is the posthumous victory of Hearst.

The newspaper is certainly the bastard paternity of the new play and novel, though father and son both refuse to acknowledge one another. Still, the son has every feature of the putative father. He is Walter Howey to the life, complete with the bright blue glass eye, and his godfathers are Hecht and MacArthur.

CLYDE LOVEJOY STEVENS

ON THE EVE OF TOMORROW

She, with Saturday fingers,
arrayed the particular,
reverent fronds;
and, with knowledgeable awe,
what was obviously wine
. . raised in the cruet;
and shrouded with mystery
the ritualed memory
of linen and silver and
unleavened wafers
thin as tissue,
as fragile a miracle
as was the constantly
present, intangible
blessing, awaiting
the one who would do it
for Him, with the grace of a
soft, Sunday hand.

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THE STAGE

When the theater of the absurd goes wrong, it can be a hard night's work trying to figure out why. Since the avowed purpose of this theater is to "go wrong" in the conventional sense, the symptomology you learned back in medical school is of little avail here. As with pop art, in which one has to distinguish good bad painting from bad bad painting, you must somehow learn to judge whether a given play has gone wrong right or gone wrong wrong; whether the clichés have bite, and whether the author has fulfilled his totally mysterious intention, or failed mysteriously to do so. (Or was failure perhaps the precise intention?)

The emperor's clothes brigade—the people who believe that no emperor anywhere has *ever* worn clothes—maintain that this is why absurd plays are written in the first place. Like a man growing a beard to hide a weak chin, the absurd playwright buries his modest ideas in impenetrable shrubbery. Bad writing? Of course—that's the whole point. Flat jokes?—a stunning commentary on our times. Boredom?—yes, wasn't that a marvellous effect? Since the critic has no clear picture of what would constitute success in each particular case, he can never be sure that the author hasn't achieved it.

This analysis is fair up to a point. There is much room for faking in any new art form, and especially in this one. Critical method has no existence prior to the form it criticizes. It is only from long exposure to the form itself that we learn how to criticize it. And while this is going on, a good deal of snake-oil is going to be sold.

But we are not doing as badly as all that. We have already seen enough of these plays to spot the more obvious frauds, and, like the wife in the Thurber story who began correcting her husband's dreams, we can now check the absurdists by their own performances. Our criticism may still be in the stammering stage, but we are beginning to *see* what's wrong, even if we can't yet say it very clearly.

One not-too-serious rule that I have stumbled upon is this: if you are going to write an absurd play you shouldn't be stingy about it; don't be half-absurd. "Tiny Alice" is an instance of a half-absurd play; the author, gulled and lulled by success perhaps, has stuck his head over the shrubbery for a second: he has exposed his ideas, and they have been shot down with considerable accuracy. There remains plenty of good, rich fog in "Tiny Alice": but there are also several fatal lapses into lucidity which only manage to throw doubt on the fuzzy parts. If the sequiturs are so flat, why should we gasp over the non-ones? Why should the cards Albee conceals be more interesting than the ones he plays?

Joyce Carol Oates, author of "The Sweet Enemy," has managed better at avoiding this mistake: she keeps her head down in the shrubbery most of the time, and her ideas retain the glamour of mystery (just as well, I think—the glimpses we do get look pretty banal: those enemies are out there, again; and love, what is love.)

But she has made another, more serious mistake: she has written an "academic" absurd play, which probably reads quite nicely, but is basically untheatrical (& even surrealist paintings have to be properly composed). Absurd plays should be crisp, and well-paced to conceal the fact that they are getting nowhere (Albee's "The American Dream" is a model in this respect) but Miss Oates' play is spectacularly soggy. One instance of this is a routine in which three overgrown children keep appearing at the door demanding Halloween gifts; by their final round, the house is stripped bare, so they kill the owner instead. A pretty idea—but not one to linger over. Three visits, four at the outside, and then bang.

But the children keep coming back, until the audience is ready to scream with boredom every time the bell rings. No doubt each visit plays a part in the overall strategy—but timing has its rights, and sometimes strategy has to be dumped. What price the author's plans if the play has died?

Repetitiousness is this play's particular albatross throughout. One character talks for five minutes about his bowling score, which it seems, has gone from 101 to 107, hovered at 107, sunk, risen, is now at 113—something like that; another character has corns on his elbows, his toes, his inner ear and I can't tell you where else. We begin to shudder convulsively when the lover rhapsodizes over his sweetheart's knees: we just know we are in for the complete tour. (And we are, too.)

Miss Oates is a good writer, witty at times, poetic at times, but this kind of stuff is simply unplayable. Even with the help of Bill Moor, an excellent actor, and Richard Ward, a very good one, it drags hopelessly, like a record that keeps getting stuck.

Absurdity is a kind of illusionism, and illusionism requires speed. The basic absurd premise, as I understand it, is that our notions of meaning and purpose are quite arbitrary inventions: that our sense impressions could be strung together on a quite different system of logic, or on no logic at all. Two people seem to be embracing—no they are fighting—no, wait a minute . . . and so, too, in a different language, mother could mean father, love could mean ice cream, sick could mean joke: we think we are surrounded by absolutes, but all it takes is for one person to flip the switch. . . .

This trick simply cannot be played as slowly as Miss Oates plays it. Even a dream has to move at a certain speed to be convincing. Our system of logic may be an illusion, but it goes deep: and anyhow, a slow conjurer is always a bore. The further question, of whether absurdity can be used as

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a vehicle for ideas other than itself—since such ideas must inevitably revert to conventional logic and language and thus land you in the "Tiny Alice" quandary—remains unanswered.

Or at least I *think* it remains unanswered. *(At the Actors Playhouse)* WILFRID SHEED

THE GREATEST IS AVERAGE

THE SCREEN

Perhaps the greatest story ever told cannot be told in the cinema medium. Certainly the moviemakers have tried often enough and even ran out of titles when they named two very different versions "King of Kings," but most of their efforts left much to be desired along religious lines or cinematic lines or both. The latest attempt, producer-director George Stevens's "The Greatest Story Ever Told," is by far the best, although even it is meeting with such a divergence of reviews that one wonders if the critics saw the same film. Their comments run the gamut from lavish, well-produced masterpiece down to dull, conglomerate disaster. These estimates, perhaps, surprise no one, not even Mr. Stevens himself. An introduction, on the printed program for the movie, states, "The film, and the portrait achieved by the represented Christ, do not so much attempt to answer Pilate's question, 'What is truth?' as to intensify each individual's desire to discover that answer for himself within his own experience, past and future. . . . Any work of art undertakes to provide answers from within the beholder."

No doubt each man, particularly those conditioned by reading, religious pictures, and church art, conceives and visualizes Christ for himself. The choice of Max von Sydow for the key role in "The Greatest Story," inspired possibly by his fine performances and looks in Bergman's pictures, especially "The Magician" and "The Virgin Spring," was excellent. Few could object to the dignified appearance of von Sydow as Christ, and his portrait of a virile Jesus with sensitivity and understanding and great love for His fellow men is superb. My only row with von Sydow's interpretation is in its austerity and lack of warmth. Surely Christ was not the cold, humorless fish von Sydow makes Him in most scenes in his godly, solid, almost stolid portrayal—a portrait that does vibrate with excitement from time to time, as when Jesus berates the elders for threatening the woman taken in adultery, or when He drives the money changers out of the temple, or when He knowingly peers at Judas at the Last Supper.

In spite of the somewhat chilly portrayal, I still found the film's Christ stirring. Much of this is due to the moving and familiar lines. The film was "Produced in Creative Association with Carl Sandburg" (whatever that means); and the screenplay was written by Stevens and James Lee Barrett from the Bible, Fulton Oursler's book, and various other writings old and new. While it omits scenes from the New Testament (the boy Jesus in the temple, the wedding at Cana and other miracles) and changes the order of incidents and famous excerpts, the script has caught well the spirit of its sources. Director Stevens curiously underplays some of the episodes which tends to make the film rather dull at times and too slow moving; but the technique also tends to give momentum to the big scenes: the Sermon on the Mount, the events of Holy Week and the Passion, and, strangely enough since it comes in the middle of the picture just before the intermission, the most exciting sequence of all, Christ's raising of Lazarus from the dead, which quivers with tension both visually and on the sound track with shouts of "The Messiah has come" and the music of Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus.

Producer Stevens has used color well, contrasting the vivid scenes with others that concentrate on whites and grays. The color photography of Utah's rugged buttes and desert landscapes is striking in Ultra Panavision 70 and the one-lens Cinerama process. At times the scenery takes over and dwarfs the figures, but the panoramas are stunning. Perhaps Stevens was over-awed by his subject matter. His film is of excessive length—four hours including the intermission. And some of his commercial touches were entirely unnecessary, particularly the use of name stars (Angela Lansbury, Carroll Baker, John Wayne, Richard Conte, Pat Boone, Shelley Winters, etc.) in small roles that could almost have been played by extras. Nevertheless, others in his star-studded cast come through well and add much just by their presence or effective portrayals: Dorothy McGuire as Christ's mother who has no lines but suffers eloquently; Charlton Heston who makes a raving, fanatic John the Baptist and is indeed a voice crying in the wilderness; Telly Savalas as a smooth, tough Pilate; Jose Ferrer as a cringing Herod; Sal Mineo as a cripple cured by Christ; Joseph Schildkraut as a member of the Sanhedrin who protests the ganging up on Jesus (the vexing Jewish situation is extremely well handled); Sidney Poitier as Simon of Cyrene (who could very well have been Negro, and the role is not just a sop to racial integration); Donald Pleasance as the personification of the Devil throughout the film, a role which Stevens uses well in scenes with Christ, Judas, Peter, and other characters.

It is interesting that Stevens chose fairly young men, instead of old white-beards, to play the apostles; and several of these fellows are refreshing in a Biblical spectacle, especially Gary Raymond as Peter and David McCallum as Judas. The film sheds no new light on Judas, but the characterization is engrossing.

Doubtlessly, one's reaction to "The Greatest Story Ever Told" depends, as with so many films, on what one brings to it. The picture is neither a masterpiece nor a disaster. It is, however a reverently told Life of Christ; and even in its old-fashioned way succeeds in expounding a message of love for man. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

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BOOKS

The relevance of a monk to his time

Seeds of Destruction

THOMAS MERTON

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $4.95

RICHARD HORCHLER

The longer Father Merton lives in cloister and silence, the louder his voice seems to become. His latest is a curious, rather disheveled collection of exhortation, reflections, jottings, and bits of personal correspondence. The unifying concern, formally, is the nation's and the world's present "time of crisis," but the aspects of that crisis and Father Merton's moods, methods and purposes in responding to them are so varied that the only real unity in these pages is that of authorship.

Part One of *Seeds of Destruction*, headed "Black Revolution," rubs white liberal noses in the hypocrisy, complacency and blindness of the establishment's response to the Negro rights struggle. And as the white liberal is the special object of Father Merton's wrath, the white liberal Christian, not to say Catholic, is to him particularly, tragically culpable.

Of course Father Merton is right in insisting that, whatever professions they make, white Christians could not possibly believe the Negro is really another Christ and still degrade, murder and mutilate him. Father Merton is right in charging the white liberal with guilt and confusion. And he is right in declaring that white atonement for the sin of racism must be marked by nothing less than complete reform of the social system which is imbued with it.

And yet, not overlooking the many individually valuable insights along the way, this section of the book is neither very moving nor very helpful. For one thing, it was written "during the early summer of 1963" and sounds it. Ideas presented as shockers, with exclamations and italic type, turn out to be—or to have become—quite unexceptionable. More seriously, Father Merton's appeals are marred by romanticism, extravagance and scorn for the sinners he would persuade. For instance, "the voice of the American Negro" gave us "a living liturgical hymnody," he says, while the "white American mind" jigs to "trite and nasal hillbilly fiddling." He is ready to believe, without qualification, that "white society has failed," which might prompt a (white liberal Christian) reader to add *Yes, and so has yellow, red, brown and black society*, except that any such comments are labeled in advance as "the fumbling evasions and inanities of those who disbelieve the message." And, in a chain of supposedly inexorable reasoning, he builds the white liberal into a final vision of "my liberal friend, goose-stepping down Massachusetts Avenue in the uniform of the American Totalitarian Party," while smoke drifts overhead from the Negro "camps."

On "The Diaspora,' considering various views of Christian responsibility in the world, Father Merton is eloquent, original—and a good deal calmer. He distinguishes tellingly between "pacifism," with it troublesome connotations, and the more precise and more positive Christian obligation to be a "peacemaker." Momentarily dropping the role of preacher, he traces a scholarly path through primitive Christian, Augustine's and Origen's attitudes on the world and especially the question of war, up through Machiavelli and Pope John. In another essay in this section, he elucidates Karl Rahner brilliantly and inspiringly on the role of the Church and the place of the Christian in the post-Christian world.

The end of the book is a sampling of letters and fragments of letters on dozens of subjects to dozens of people, some well known and others unidentified. (Among the identified: Dorothy Day, Jacques Maritain, Sister Madeleva, Mark Van Doren.) Subject matter, recipient or contents give interest to some of these brief notes. Others are so private or perfunctory they make one wonder why they were included.

What all this adds up to is a mixed, uneven and unsettling volume. Its wrong prophecies of doom and gloom (e.g., that in 1962 the U.S. would either push the nuclear button or go fascist), the inconsistencies, excesses, etc., could easily have been corrected by the author or his publisher. The fact that they were not, reinforced by the motley nature of the contents, suggests Father Merton is really not offering a book about the crises of our times at all but actually a book—and an honest one—about himself responding to the crises of our times. The real problem for Father Merton, I suspect, is not civil rights or peace or Christian diaspora but the relevance of the contemplative monk to the issues of his times. In these wide-ranging essays, sermons, responses to books and events, and in his extraordinary, urgency-filled letters, it seems to me, Father Merton is trying almost desperately to say *something*, anything to initiate a dialogue with the world outside the monastery.

In such a light, *Seeds of Destruction* looks rather different. That it was published "warts and all" may be seen, in such a light, as part of its earnest sense of responsibility, part of its love and anguish.

The New Improved American

BERNARD ASBELL

McGraw-Hill, $4.95

GEOFFREY WAGNER

Modestly subtitled "The Real Promise of Automation: an end to mass ignorance, regimented education, chronic unemployment, and the

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sources of racial conflict," Bernard Asbell's new book (culled from *McCalls, Redbook, Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post*) makes a fitting follow-up to Alvin Toffler's *The Culture Consumers*, reviewed in these columns recently. Ever onward and upward, with Toffler and Asbell.

The latter's thesis, if it can be called such, is that our existence was largely "subhuman" prior to the machine, and remains so in pockets of the U.S.A. (dwelt on at length). The machine has helped correct such conditions and yet further machinery will eliminate the last repellent vestiges of repetitive labor. Man will be liberated to acquire "skills" (never too well defined, but usually turning out to be mathematics, despite the parallel contention that the acquisition of factual information will be superseded by something called "curiosity"). By stressing new qualifications, automation will emphasize higher and better education.

About halfway through, the book loses much seriousness and turns into a pollyanna panegyric. I simply do not know whether "Machines create far more jobs than they destroy," as Asbell alleges. But, when he enters on my own competence, the shallowness of his thinking is apparent. Anyone who seriously believes that the Higher Horizons program in New York has achieved anything should visit an underprivileged junior high classroom in the city at once, or see a psychiatrist. (Better still, perhaps, read the articles on such teaching lately in *Village Voice*.) He should certainly not be a consultant on education to the Ford Foundation.

Asbell's book turns into so much verbal Norman Rockwell for the PTA. It becomes fantastic. Chocolates get sorted by robots (no more amputated fingers). Poor farm areas turn overnight into urban utopias. Housewives hit college. Crowds roar. Lights flash. Cancer tumors disappear (as rapidly as racial prejudice). "Backaches and abdominal pains . . . the common occupational diseases of the unemployed" vanish "under the miracle drug of opportunity." School becomes "an exercise in eagerness," in which teachers (with "eyes agleam") watch their charges "escape forward" into the new Erewhon.

Montessori is the new panacea, under, of course, a "fortyish, curly-haired, bony-jawed" principal. Blue-eyed boys donate $50 to local factories, while small-town Mayors make folksy comments like "we got a long suit on friendliness." The while King Computer chuckles in the background ("by 1970 the telephone company will earn more from conversations between computers than conversations between people"). If you feel critical of this picture (let alone have the yen to throw up), you are told you are an intellectual, and an elitist—"America is witnessing the emergence of a new working class . . . of clean hands and trained minds, physical comfort and economic security." Just like Russia, eh.

It is important to oppose the "thinking" of a book like this because it arrogates to itself the flag of human dignity, yet tragically reverses those great Victorians who fought for it in the teeth of the machine—Coleridge, Carlyle, Arnold, Ruskin, Morris Kingsley ("no limit to the possibility of man's becoming heroic . . . "). They would have identified this new philistia, the donkey's carrot of reaction, with its easy sneers at unions, at "job security," and—parenthetically—at the romantic imagination in general, the genesis of our ideals.

Portrait of a Decade

ANTHONY LEWIS

Random House, $6.95

WILLIAM B. GOULD

"New Negro?" said a Negro mail carrier in Montgomery, Alabama. "It's just us old Negroes, the same old folks. It's not the 'new Negro'—it's the 'new times.' Only we know it, that's all, and the white folks here haven't caught on yet." The times are indeed changing and the last ten years—a period of churning upheaval aptly characterized as "The Second American Revolution"—are well chronicled in this multi-authored book.

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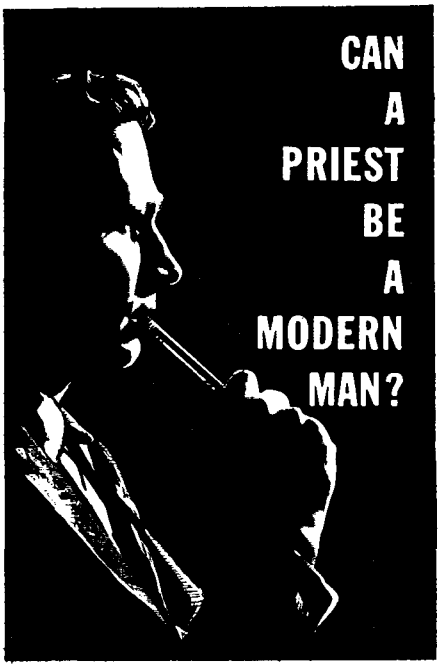

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Consisting of three chapters written by Anthony Lewis, the *New York Times'* legal correspondent, and numerous articles and dispatches from the *Times, Portrait of a Decade* brings to mind again the many aspects of the struggle—the School Segregation Cases; Montgomery; Dr. King and Non-Violent Action; Washington's role in implementing school integration and the right to vote; Birmingham, April 1963. It also brings to mind the very fine role that the *New York Times* has assumed in highlighting the morality and justice inherent in the Negro's claim on equality. Most important of all, the book contains stinging proof of the incredible burden that America has placed on the shoulders of every Negro: the penance that this nation has extracted from those whose only wrongdoing is that they are not born white.

"We boast of freedom enjoyed by our people above all other people," said the first Justice Harlan dissenting in *Plessy v. Ferguson,* "but it is difficult to reconcile that boast with a state of law which, practically, puts the brand of servitude upon a large class of our fellow citizens." In this past decade many white Americans exhibited a profound difficulty in making this troublesome reconciliation. Perhaps that alone warrants the prominence that history will surely accord to it. *Brown v. Board of Education,* in which the Supreme Court held that segregated public educational facilities were inherently unequal and therefore unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment, ushered in the decade. It ushered in a period in which the Executive and Congressional branches of the federal government would follow the Court's lead and thus echo Justice Harlan's truism (a truism, that is to say, in the contemporary world) that the Constitution is color blind.

Of course it is somewhat misleading —and *Portrait of a Decade* emphasizes this—to lump the decade together into one common theme. Lethargy and plain infidelity to the principles enunciated by the Court in *Brown* cut the heart out of the integrationist movement, brought the pace of school desegrega-

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tion to a grinding halt at the end of the Eisenhower Administration and simultaneously robbed the concept of "gradualism" of any respectability.

Small wonder. For those who may have forgotten President Eisenhower's moral abdication on this issue, this book recalls the memorable press conferences after which, upon reading the transcript, many of us chortled in outraged amazement. What splendid material this is for the television documentary which utilizes sequences ad nauseam. In Little Rock a woman outside Central High School questions the *Times* Education editor, Benjamin Fine: "You got a nigger wife?," a woman asked the reporter. She was identified later as a waitress in a Little Rock tavern. Mr. Fine did not answer. "Are you a Jew?," the woman shouted. "Yes," Mr. Fine said. And at the White House that day the President, in response to a question about Little Rock said, "you cannot change people's hearts merely by laws" and further that people in the South "see a picture of mongrelization of the race, they call it." In the critical days of Little Rock when those few gallant Negro children braved the concerted savagery of Southern bigots, to whose aid did our government come? To children seeking basic constitutional rights? Or to those who feared, in the President's words, "mongrelization," the deflowering of white Southern womanhood whose foul language at Oxford, Mississippi five years later shocked even our U.S. Army troops?

Small wonder that progress was dying a death of attrition when President Eisenhower stated his opposition to fair employment practices legislation on the ground that "certain things are not best handled by punitive or compulsory federal law"; that he would discuss FEPC with Southern governors in a conference that was never called; the hands-off attitude towards the University of Alabama's expulsion of Miss Autherine Lucy. Finally, the President's comment, as quoted in the book, on his own Civil Rights Bill of 1957 is not without significance: "I would not want to answer this in detail, because I was reading part of the bill this morning and I—there were certain phrases I didn't completely understand." But the dike could not hold back the flood of pent up resentment during the Kennedy Administration.

How fortunate we may be for that Administration's commitment on this issue can never be known. The logic of President Kennedy, goaded into action by the collision course of demonstrations and police dogs, seems eternally irrefutable: ". . . who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his (the Negro's) place. Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay?"

1965 finds this country at the beginning of a new decade, one which, it is now fashionable to prophesy, will be less reliant upon the procedures of the law, more addicted to "social action" and eventually "self-help." It is, of course, true that meaningful racial harmony rests in the hearts of men and thus beyond the law's reach. It is also correct to say that the Negro must help himself more than he has done in the past if the cause is to be furthered. But, as the *Times*' delightful transcript of the radio discussion of racial problems by Little Rock students testifies, the law channels and stimulates responses.

The barricades of public accommodation segregation may well crumble quickly. Voting, however, could prove more sticky. And the basic law regarding fair employment practices is, like education in 1954, yet to be hammered out by way of the weary process of implementation. What is probably the basic and most lasting issue in the North — housing — now travels through the courts warding off, in defense, the onslaught of homespun ordinances and referenda which currently besiege the civil rights movement. In all of this, there appears to be much work for the already hard-pressed judiciary.

True, the basic principles are nearly all established. But one must ask, as did James Reston on the memorable day of the March on Washington, whether these principles can become reality: "The question of the day was raised by Dr. King's theme: Was this all a dream, or will it help the dream come true?"

The answer is, as *Portrait of a Decade* says, yet in doubt. Assuming that the movement does not lose its allies through tactics akin to those which brought opprobrium to the South, one must tentatively conclude in the affirmative. Surely at this point there can be no turning back from the goal of equal protection under our laws. But the cry goes up: When?

One Day

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WARREN MILLER

In March, on the first day of false Spring, old literary agents become agitated, suffer from shortness of breath: they know in their bones that all over America young writers are slouching toward their typewriters, and that in a matter of months the agents' desks will be piled high with manuscripts which begin: "Spring came early that year. . ." After the assassination of President Kennedy, after the reaction of remorse and anger had diminished, agents and publishers began to brace themselves for the deluge of novels which would begin with the words: "That day. . ." Some knowledgable types even speculated that these would outnumber the Pearl Harbor novels, which began, of course: "That day. . ."

The race is on; the first of these novels has arrived. Unexpectedly, it is not the work of a new writer but of an old hand; this is Wright Morris' thirteenth novel. Those readers who remember the oddly angled examination of the commonplace which was a notable virtue of *The Field of Vision* and *Ceremony in Lone Tree*, and the savage and telling comedic talent revealed in *Love Among the Cannibals*, are bound to be puzzled by this one. There is something too dutiful here; it has the air of a poem manufactured by the Laureate to celebrate a doubtful but expensive victory in the Bush. Perhaps it ought to be read that way: as yet another tribute to that dead

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young man, well-intentioned but very wide of the mark, like the lumpy busts in simulated bronze, and the renaming of airports.

The Day runs out within the confines of a California town, Escondido. It is the kind of place where buses arrive on the hour, carrying tourists who still thrill to *gift items* imported from Italy, and the commercially calculated picturesque: Beatniks living on wharfs over the mud flats. Its chief characters are a veternarian, the town's first lady, and her vaguely beatnik daughter. This last, a bit of a Freedom Rider but primarily the ancient poor-little-rich-girl, deposits her illegitimate child at the dog pound. There is also a Mexican, an Italian barber, and the mortician: he does not actually appear in the novel but he does give a monologue on death on the local radio station; alas, it is recorded verbatim.

It has to be said that Mr. Morris' characters are as determinedly picturesque as the town itself; the author's immense effort to galvanize them into a semblance of life becomes, all too soon, a discomfort shared by the reader. These people are, in the meanest sense of the word, literary: the grandchildren of Winesberg, Ohio, now come to the outermost boundary in California. The easy climate has softened them. Back home they were strange and cantankerous, touched by tragedy, capable of moving us; now in California they merely indulge themselves in supermarkets and dull eccentricities.

Is Morris telling us something about the idiocy of life in suburbia, the "creeping New Jersey" (as another writer calls it) which is one of our chief afflictions? It is not clear. There is an uncertainty, false starts and stops, tentative offerings withdrawn as soon as the author's confidence fails: this tortuous construction—if it is, indeed, construction—gives the novel whatever anguish it has. A theory is offered by the veternarian, the notion of the Meaningful Accident, but it is dropped immediately and not taken up again. Morris also tries on, very briefly, that idea (or it it merely a refrain?) so dear to the heart of Arthur Miller and TV dramatists: *We are all guilty.*

There is the temptation to pause here and go on at length about this terrible confusion between the assignment to guilt and justice itself; but it must, of course, be resisted and our remarks limited to the confines of this novel. One is then bound to say that such notions, as well as the device of choosing that day in November, is an unhappy attempt to replace art with a spurious "universalizing." I pray we will not be subject much longer to this nasty embrace.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 751*)

was given to these countries in 1950-1961, but they "lost" $13 billion during the same period due to the relative decline in the price of their exports) has caused price stability of primary commodities to be accepted by the UNCTAD and in the new chapter of the GATT. The other day I heard a very prominent businessman with extensive interests in South America propose the same remedy to a group of New York businessmen. Of course, I assume, as they do, that tariff reforms and diversification of exports would also be aimed at by the developing countries. But Brazil for example could hardly switch overnight from coffee producing, inasmuch as she lost 150 million dollars in one period of the past year because of the fall of the price of coffee.

I think is was rather unfair of Professor Kottke to hide behind the technicalities of the Gross National Product concept to minimize my point about the prosperity of the U.S. Every economist uses this and *per capita* income to assess wealth fully aware of the reservations which one must make about these inadequate but best available yardsticks.

With regard to my reference to India losing in a few months an amount equal to what the World Bank had loaned over 6 years, I do not understand how he could possibly use this to imply that I think that that is the only source of aid and that I am unaware of the immense effort that the U.S. has made with regard to aid in the years since the war. This is unprecedented in history and in the four books and numerous articles which I have written on poverty and population I have made it very clear indeed how I view the magnificent generosity of the American people and of the U.S. government in giving aid.

It is however quite compatible with this attitude to suggest, as I did, that more must be done by all the Free World, including the U.S., because the problems of world poverty are so complex and so urgent. I would like to maintain with all due deference to the professor that the developing countries have by no means reached the ceiling of absorbability of aid, though certain countries may have. My own experience in West Africa with government officials and during a recent tour of Latin America confirms what may be gathered from the fact that the reasonable targets of the Development Decade for investment in the developing countries have not been reached. Investment in South America has fallen well below what President Kennedy set as a reasonable goal.

I should really require another 5000-word article to do full justice to Professor Kottke's letter, but I hope that this letter has helped to clarify one or two points.

(REV.) ARTHUR MC CORMACK

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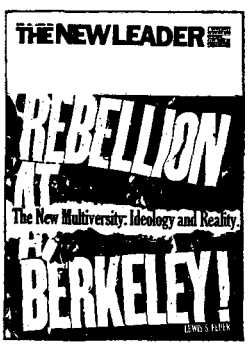

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Why then, one wonders, does this ungrateful little magazine continue to have any writers, readers, or financial supporters. The first part of this question is the easiest to answer.

Men like (and as unalike as) Daniel Bell, Eric Bentley, Juan Bosch, Milovan Djilas, Ralph Ellison, Louis Fischer, Michael Harrington, Sidney Hook, Hubert H. Humphrey, George F. Kennan, Martin Luther King Jr., Marvin Kitman, Robert Lekachman, George Lichtheim, S. L. A. Marshall, Karl E. Meyer, Hans J. Morgenthau, Howard Nemerov, Reinhold Niebuhr, A. H. Raskin, John P. Roche, Bertrand Russell, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Jacques Sous-telle, and Ronald Steel continue to contribute articles without pay to The New Leader for just three reasons: It will let them say what they want to say, the way they want to say it, to the people they want to say it to.

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And the editors of The New York Times, Time Magazine, Fortune, Life, The Washington Post, The New York Post, and the St. Louis Post Dispatch (all of which have sometimes quoted from, praised, criticized, or publicly argued with The New Leader) read The New Leader. And the members of the Overseas Press Club (which has awarded its Citation for the "best magazine reporting of foreign affairs" to The New Leader) read The New Leader. And that's almost 0.022% of the adult population of the United States right there.

Presumably all these people continue to read The New Leader—even though it frequently infuriates them—because it airs facts, ideas, insights, and viewpoints long before they get aired anywhere else. As Murray Kempton put it, "The New Leader has always been about two years ahead of The New York Times in telling you what is going on in the world."

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The New Leader

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